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ABSTRACT

This study investigated outcome data obtained from six samples of primary school students, four of which consisted of at-risk students. Participants were: (1) 46 students from a transitional first-grade, developmental, regular education school readiness program (SRP) for at-risk kindergartners; (2) 20 nonplaced kindergartners who were recommended for SRP and who advanced directly into first grade; (3) 31 kindergartners judged ready for promotion into first grade from kindergarten; (4) 16 students held out of kindergarten; (5) 24 students retained in kindergarten, first, or second grade; and (6) a random sample of 18 second graders. Along with standardized achievement outcomes and demographic background variables, the investigation probed the role of teacher-rated social, problematic, behavioral, motivation, success, self-esteem, classroom participation, and engagement characteristics of students. Parent surveys examined the role of parental level of education, attitudes, and other contextual factors. Findings suggested that extra-year students were characterized by lower achievement ratings and teacher ratings than random or promoted students who were one year younger. Cautions about policy and a review of research on transitional first-grade program outcomes are appended. (RH)

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Longitudinal Outcome Differences and Correlates Among At Risk Kindergarten, Promoted and Transitional Students: Academic, Related Services and Social-Behavioral Profiles

Dr. Phil Ferguson

UCSD#1

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Abstract

This present study investigates the outcome data obtained from pre-kindergarten screening through second grade spring achievement test across six sample populations consisting of: a) 46 students from a transitional first grade developmental regular education school readiness program (SRP) for 'at-risk' kindergartners, b) 20 non-placed but SRP recommended kindergarten students advanced directly into first grade, c) 31 kindergarten students judged ready for kindergarten promotion into regular first grade d) 16 students held out of kindergarten, e) 24 students retained in kindergarten first or second grade, and f) a random sample of 18 second graders. Comparative SRP and non SRP placed samples were equated on sex, chronological age at entrance to kindergarten, Gesell School Readiness Test scores and a developmental delay statistic.

The role of teacher rated student social, problematic, behavioral, motivation, success, self-esteem, classroom participation and engagement domains, as well as selected demographic background variables are examined along with standardized achievement outcomes. Referral and placement rates profile support educational services of special services, remedial reading, Chapter I, social skills and counseling across the samples. Parent surveys examined the role of parental level of education, attitudes and other contextual factors. Controlled analysis notes which factors, variables and outcomes across the various cross breaks of at risk samples indicate significant or non significant outcomes. Predictive validity indices relate three readiness assessment instruments (Gesell, Metropolitan Readiness Tests and the Brigance K & 1st Screen) to second grade standardized achievement results.

Controlled analysis noted nonsignificant academic outcomes differences between SRP placed and controlled nonplaced samples. Validity indices reflected poor predictive readiness assessment instruments correlations with half, one year and three-four year second grade standardized achievement results. Findings suggest that extra year students fair lower achievement and teacher ratings than random or promoted year younger students. Students recommended for SRP placement yet not placed in comparison with the year older SRP placed students did not exhibit significant second grade differences across achievement, related services, parental factors or teacher rating outcomes favoring the SRP placed older students. Among SRP placed students only one fifth of those eligible to improve their relative achievement standing to the mean mean level of average achievement in second grade did so. Among SRP placed students only one fifth of those eligible to improve their relative achievement standing to the mean mean level average achievement in second grade did so. Among SRP placed students, ninety-eight percent attained above the mean average of their new kindergarten promoted year younger classmates after their SRP year, yet sixty-five percent of these students dropped back to a below average status by the end of second grade dissipating their SRP treatment effect in less than two years. Recommendations for proscriptive concerns are provided along with policy cautions.

August 25, 1990

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Longitudinal Outcome Differences and Correlates Among At Risk Kindergarten, Promoted and Transitional Students: Academic, Related Services and Social-Behavioral Profiles

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Introduction to the Study

Early educational 'extra year' programs (transitional first grade, kindergarten retentions) are purported by some to be of value in preventing future school failure in subsequent years (Day and Drake, 1986, November; Dolan, 1982; Friesen, 1984, March; Galloway and George, 1986; Uphoff and Gilmore, 1985, September). Their purpose is intended to protect 'unready' students from entering school too soon (Ames, Gillespie & Streff, 1985; Gesell Institute of Human Development, 1987; Grant, 1986). Extra year programs are seen as a 'growth year' for immature or delayed children, helping develop their readiness skills for successful school achievement when they are a year older; "Repeating should be the solution for children who are too immature for the work of a grade in question and thus need to be older to succeed..." (Scott & Ames, 1969, p. 434, italics added).

The current literature on grade retention in kindergarten however profiles alarming concerns regarding both the practice and the assessment determination methodologies for such early grade retentions (Brophy, 1989, April 10; Durkin, 1987; Elson, 1989, November 13; May and Welch, 1984a; May and Welch, 1984b; Medway and Rose, 1986; Meisels, 1986, November; Meisels, 1989b; Olson, 1990; Ordovensky, 1989, June 13; Ordovensky, 1989, June 14; Petersen, DeGracie and Ayabe, 1987; Rose, Medway, Cantrell and Marus, 1983; Rubenstein, 1989, August; Shepard and Smith, 1986; Smith and Shepard, 1987). A review of school readiness program (SRP) research study findings will not be presented here but is important and essential in understanding salient policy facets regarding this subject. (See Appendix A.)

Actual research literature on extra year programs specific to transitional school readiness first grade evaluations contain fewer than twenty-five research studies, with the large majority of these being doctoral dissertations. These outcome studies on kindergarten SRP retentions reflect mostly academic findings only, and in the very few cases social-behavioral outcomes (Shepard and Smith, 1989). Among controlled studies investigating SRP academic outcomes (including a half dozen not reviewed by Shepard), not one finds a superior academic performance past the first grade for the SRP placed year older students over those eligible, equally unready and recommended for SRP placement but passed directly into first grade and thus one year younger (e.g., Banerji, 1990; Caggiano, 1984; Jones, 1985; Kilby, 1982; Mossburg, 1987, Stapleford, 1982).

The present study was undertaken in order to study a district's 'at risk' population of young students placed or recommended for placement in extra year programs. Unlike past SRP studies however, this study sought to examine parental contextual factors as well as social, behavioral and related service factors not examined in previous SRP studies. In addition, several 'extra year' populations, as well as other non at risk random and stratified samples were studied along with readiness test predictive validity correlations.

Methods

The present study employs two experimental designs: a quasi-experimental longitudinal evaluation as well as post hoc exploratory investigations. The design of the present study was limited based upon:

- available previous district testing, SRP program and database records, and
- the sample selection methodology implemented prior to 1990 by the district.

Current 1990 assessment methods included a review of each study sample child's building records, current SRA Achievement Series test scores, current second grade teacher ratings, current parent questionnaires, a review of records for related services that a child may have received in the past two years, and placement and recommendation records for SRP students.

Study Samples

School Readiness Program (SRP) - Students enrolled in a one year transitional first grade, child-centered maturation growth year; regular education program for the school year of 1987-1988. These students entered school in 1986-1987 as kindergartners and were assessed as unready for first grade in the spring of their kindergarten year, subsequently being placed in a transitional first grade setting.

SRP- Non Participants (SRP-NP) - Students identified and recommended for placement in SRP in 1988-89, but not placed due to parental wishes or class size restrictions.

Held Out Kindergartners (HOK) - Students meeting the district's age requirement for school entrance in 1986-1987, but who were held out of kindergarten for a year by parents.

Random 1st Grade Students (FIRST) - A random selection of first grade students who entered first grade in 1987-1988 and who were not recommended for SRP placement in the spring of their kindergarten experience, thereby representing a stratified sample of those judged ready for entering first grade at the spring 1987 kindergarten 'readiness assessment'.

Promoted First Graders (PRO) - A random selection of 1987-88 kindergarten students recommended for promotion to first grade in spring of 1988, all of whom were not recommended for SRP placement.

Retained Students (RET) - A selection of all students retained in one of the following grade K-2nd grade, as identified by school records who are currently in second grade.

Random Sample (R) - A random selection of students currently in second grade.

District Sample (DS) - All second grade students taking the spring SRA Achievement Series test.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria Caveats for the Samples

SRP	=	a, b, c, d, f
SRP-NP	=	a, b, c, d, f, h
HOK	=	b, c, d, e,
R	=	a, b, c, d, e, g, i,
PRO	=	a, b, c, d, e, g, h,
RET	=	a, b, c, e, f
FIRST	=	No restrictive caveats for this sample except (e) .
DS	=	No restrictive caveats

Caveat Key:

a) - Not held out prior to kindergarten
b) - No bilingual services received or recommended
c) - No special education referral or placement in kindergarten (speech service excluded), and no physical handicapping condition (hearing, cerebral palsy, etc.)
d) - No grade retention in K, 1st or 2nd
e) - No SRP placement
f) - Includes all district 2nd grade students within this category

g) - Includes a random sample of district 2nd grade students within this category
h) - A few students were also in the R population (N = 3)
i) - A few students were also in the PROMOTED population (N = 3)

Caveat and Research Notes: All sample students (except FIRST) were enrolled K thru 2nd grade within the district and all students are Caucasian. District non Caucasian enrollment rate is four percent. Ninety four percent of enrolled district second graders were administered the spring 1990 SRA Achievement Series. 1987-88 was the first year of the district's SRP program. The student samples of SRP, RET and HOK are roughly a year older than the other samples. The attrition rate for the SRP group from fall 1987 to spring 1990 was 35% with all of these students reflecting out of district moves or caveat exclusions. The attrition rate for the PRO sample from spring 1988 to spring 1990 was 43 % and with all of these students reflecting out of district moves or caveat exclusions. The percentage of kindergarten students selected for SRP placement and placed for the school year of 1987-88 represents 24% of the kindergarten class of 1986-1987 or 21% of the 1987-1988 kindergarten class. In most cases special education students, minorities and physically disabled students were excluded from SRP placement consideration, although exceptions were made. SRP-NP students were identified by both school records which noted the recommendation for SRP placement and SRP teacher retrospective accounting methods for those SRP teachers involved in SRP placement decisions. Only students for which there were confirmational data as to their actual recommendation for SRP placement were included in the SRP nonplaced sample.

Study Site

This study was conducted in a small Rocky Mountain community (population 12,000) with a mean school district K-12 enrollment of 3,592 students between the school years of 1987 and 1990. This district is composed of four K-5 elementary schools with the average enrollment between the four schools of around 440 students each over the past four years.

Sample Size and Demographic Statistics

Table 1 provides the characteristics of the sample populations in terms of sample size, sex, average number of school moves, and number and percent receiving free or reduced lunch services for each sample. Originally the 1990 random sample was much larger, but because of the specific sample caveat restrictions more than half of this population had to be eliminated due to the exclusionary caveats. (e.g., held out prior to kindergarten, retained, recommended for SRP but not placed, moved into the district after kindergarten, prior to first grade special education services, non-Caucasian, physical handicapping condition, etc.). Chronological age scores are provided in months as of February 1990.

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Insert Table Table 1 about here

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Measures

Instruments

Brigance K & 1st Screen. This individually administered early education criterion-referenced school readiness instrument was administered to all 1986-1978 entering kindergarten students in the spring of 1986 (Brigance, 1982; Boehm, 1985; Wright, 1985).

Gesell School Readiness Test. This individually administered criterion-referenced school readiness instrument was administered to nearly all students recommended for consideration for SRP placement and was administered in the spring of their kindergarten school year by one of several Gesell trained district staff member (Bear and Modlin, 1987; Bradley, 1985; Haines, Ames, Mathews, 1980; Ilg, Ames, Haines and Gillespie, 1978; Kaufman, 1985; Najlieri, 1985; Walker, 1989).

Metropolitan Readiness Tests. (MRT) This group administered criterion-referenced school readiness instrument was administered to all SRP placed students (present on day of administration) in the fall and spring of their SRP year (1987-1988), as well as to a stratified random sample of non SRP recommended students (FIRST) entering first grade students in the fall of 1987, and a promoted sample (PRO) of kindergartners in the spring of 1988 (Nurss and McGauvran, 1976; Ravitch, 1985)

SRA Achievement Series. (Level 22 for second grade) This group administered norm-referenced achievement test was administered to district students in the spring of 1990. It should be noted that the district choose not to administer a standardized achievement test in the school years of 1986-1989 to grades K and first grade.

Teacher Ratings. Teacher ratings were secure in May of 1990. Teachers were unaware of the purpose of the student ratings, completing the requested student ratings across the study sample students without knowledge of the sample selection procedures or the intended study questions. The district's superintendent for curriculum and personnel directed each teacher to complete a rating as: "...part of an evaluation and information gathering project to better serve all of our students with at risk needs." The rating scales were presented as "...part of our district's effort to serve all of our students with diverse backgrounds, needs and incoming student characteristics." 100% of the teacher ratings were completed. Fourteen second grade teachers rated between 9 and 16 students or a total of 115 students within the four study samples (SRP, SRP-NP, PRO and RANDOM samples only). All information obtained was kept confidential.

Second grade teachers were asked to rate:

a) - a child's social/peer relations skills using a 3 item 1-9 Likert-like scale (Low to High),
-works well with peers
-positive use of 'transition time'
-positive peer social skills

b) - a child's adaptive behavioral performance skills using a 3 item 1-9 Likert-like scale,
-independent work effort
-task completion effort
-works up to perceived ability level

c) - a child's engagement/participation skills using a 3 item 1-9 Likert-like scale,
-participation and involvement in classroom academics
-interest and enjoyment in classroom academics
-positive 'bond' with schooling

d) - a child's success/belief in self skills using a 3 item 1-9 Likert-like scale,
-experiences success in classroom academics
-experiences positive contributions to the class
-experiences belief in ability to succeed

e) - a child's self-esteem skills using a 3 item 1-9 Likert-like scale,
-positive self-esteem
-self-confidence
-expresses positive mood

f) - a child's attentiveness/listening skills using a 3 item 1-9 Likert-like scale,
-attentiveness to teacher's verbal directions
-attentiveness to task demands
-listening skills

g) - a child's exhibited "'hyperactive' physical/motor behaviors", rated as criteria ('1') or non criteria ('0') based upon a "yes" or "no" response or on a 1-9 Likert-like scale were 6 or above was criteria.

h) - a child's exhibited "aggressive (physical or verbal) behaviors", rated as criteria ('1') or non criteria ('0') based upon a "yes" or "no" response or on a 1-9 Likert-like scale were 6 or above was criteria,

i) - a child's basic reading skills using a 1 item 1-9 Likert-like scale
j) - a child's basic mathematics skills using a 1 item 1-9 Likert-like scale
k)- a child's written language skills using a 1 item 1-9 Likert-like scale
l) - a child's exhibited need for "extra teacher assistance or intervention for behavioral, social or emotional issues", rated as criteria ('1') or non criteria ('0') based upon a "yes" or "no" response or on a 1-9 Likert-like scale response were 6 or above was criteria.
m) - a child's exhibited need for "extra teacher assistance or intervention for academic instruction or remediation" rated as criteria ('1') or non criteria ('0') based upon a "yes" or "no" response or on a 1-9 Likert-like scale response were 6 or above was criteria,
n) - a child's exhibited general progress in school using a Likert-like 1-5 scale, where 5 'agree very much' with the statement "child is progressing well in school" and 1 was 'do not agree'.

Related Services

Records from several related service programs within the district were analyzed and tallyed for placement rates (number/percentile) inclusive within each sample:

a) - Special service referral for evaluation (post kindergarten not including speech only),
b) - Special service placement for service (post kindergarten not including speech only),
c) - Federal free or reduced-price lunch/breakfast program services,
d) - Counseling services specifically from the elementary school counselor,
e) - Remedial reading and/or Chapter One services within the last two years,
f) - Counseling and/or social skills services inclusive of, or other than school counselor.

Parent Surveys

Parent questionnaires were sent home with the study sample students, along with a letter of introduction from the assistant superintendent very much akin to the teacher's letter. The survey requested information about the child's background and was presented to the parent as a voluntary participation request. All information was kept confidential, and no child's name was used in the questionnaire to appear as if the survey was random. The survey requested information on:

-maternal level of education
-paternal level of education
-occupational level of the 'head of household' (six levels)

-home learning activities [based upon B S. Bloom (1988, March) works]
-parent perceived level of the child's school progress
-parent perceived quality of education that the child has received
-parent perceived beneficial child-related educational decisions
-parent perceived value of education for their child,

with the second cluster of items scaled on a five point Likert-like format. The respondent return rate for this questionnaire was 49.5 percent.

Quasi-Experimental Sample

The two experimental samples represent those students recommended for SRP placement and placed, and those recommended but not placed. Table 2 provides the Gesell School Readiness Tests developmental age scores and a 'developmental delay statistic' (chronological age - developmental age) for these two samples provided in months with the SEM metrics. Both experimental samples

were administered the Gesell in the spring of their kindergarten year. Gesell scores were scaled in three month intervals and administered by Gesell Institute trained, district personnel. The two samples are equated statistically in terms of chronological age at entrance to kindergarten, developmental age and the developmental delay statistic.

Insert Table 2 about here

Limitations of this Study

This investigation is limited to:

- this study's investigating the outcomes of Caucasians only and as such may be limited to SRP programs within such populations settings,

- this study's SRP sample reflects this district's high percentage of SRP placed students (> 20%). As such, the outcomes may be limited to other districts which have a high SRP placement rates,

- this study's SRP sample reflects a pronounced child-centered SRP curriculum philosophy and may be limited to SRP programs with such maturational-nativist-Gesellians orientations (as opposed to a more direct instruction criterion-referenced intervention and diagnostic approach),

- this study's unique characteristics of SRP program logistics of involving parents, identification of students and specifically articulated dimensions and service range and restrictions of this district's SRP program.

- this study's SRP program identification, selection and recommendation procedures portrayed in the spring of 1987 and 1988, and any differential bias between the two since SRP-NP students were recommended the following year than the SRP placed students.

- this study's use of second grade teacher ratings to infer the domain profiles of behavioral characteristics of students.

Research Methodology Notes:

One logistical problem encountered in conducting this study for the district as requested in early 1990 by the superintendent, was the obtainment of the data base of demographic and student variables across the factors of: four elementary schools, four years of student services, two different kindergarten classes (1986-87 and 1987-87) and several related service offices, etc. Record formats (e.g., school intake developmental histories for all entering kindergarten students), that were available were not consistent in terms of their format, content or scope across year or school settings and posed a serious methodology problem in trying to equate and develop initial status data on each child across all of the samples. As an example, the Brigance K & 1st Screen was administered one year, but not another and some schools chose not to administer this kindergarten screening instrument. Developmental data on each child and their family demographics were compiled at school registration (1987-88 year only not 1986-1987), but only in some schools and the form used was narrative in content not metric-oriented so that little quantitative data could be obtained or aggregated.

Had the district chosen to adopt a single metric-oriented student enrollment intake form, a single metric-oriented developmental history form (with family background indices), provided district-wide kindergarten readiness assessment to all incoming students each year, provided district-wide standardized assessment (with cognitive ability testing) for kindergarten and first grade students,

and the coordinator of the SRP program chosen to select in 1987-1988 a more prudent experimental design for a 'control' sample (e.g., assessed the SRP-NP students on the MRT, etc.), this study would have been completed with a close to 100% respondent rate on essential, salient family contextual factors, as well as initial achievement and cognitive related factors associated with student educational outcomes.

Results

Analysis between the sample findings reflect two levels of comparisons: same year [using same grade norm but different age samples- such as school readiness program students (SRP) compared with the promoted non SRP recommended students (SRP-NP) one year younger], and same age comparisons [using same grade norms and same age samples- such as SRP placed students to students retained (RET) or held out of kindergarten (HELDOUT) a year].

Comparisons also reflect two types of comparisons: equated (e.g, SRP vs. SRP-NP, that are equated on kindergarten readiness indices), and non equated samples (e.g., SRP vs. PROMOTED) that do not have initial kindergarten developmental or achievement data reported.

Non Equated Control Group Comparisons

Table 3 provides the results from three samples of students. School readiness program students (SRP), the promoted non SRP recommended kindergarten students (PRO) and promoted kindergarten students in first grade (FIRST) were each administered the Metropolitan Readiness Tests (MRT).

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Insert Table 3 about here

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Fall-1987

The SRP sample started their transitional first grade program in the fall of 1987 and were administered the MRT during this time. The results of this administration of the the MRT using first grade fall norms noted 41st and 32nd national percentile rankings for reading and quantitative skills respectfully for this SRP sample of enrolled students in a transitional first grade program. As a comparison, the first grade (FIRST) percentile ranking for a random sample of beginning fall 1987 first graders (those promoted and not enrolled in the district's SRP program) indicated a mean MRT percentile score of 70.3 and 70.4 on reading and quantitative skills respectfully. The SRP sample notes a negative -1.36 standard deviation difference from the entering first grade students in reading skills and a -1.64 metric difference in quantitative skills.

This difference provides insight into the relative standing between the promoted sample and the SRP placed sample suggesting that the SRP placed students were well behind their promoted kindergarten classmates. The results of the fall, 1987 MRT testing results for the SRP and FIRST unequated samples noting same age metrics suggest that the promoted kindergartners entering first grade reflect a sizeable and highly statistically significant MRT assessed readiness advantage over those SRP placed students held behind one year.

Spring- 1988

At the end of their SRP extra year in spring of 1988, the SRP's MRT scores reflected 84th and 81st percentile using spring MRT kindergarten norms. (There are no spring first grade norms for the MRT. Using fall norms however, the spring 1988 Pre-Reading Composite raw score for the SRP sample is recorded at 78.75 and indicates a significant gain in readiness skill over the fall scores.). A random sample of spring 'to be promoted kindergartners' (PRO), noted 59th and 62nd percentile scores, some -2.19 and -.85 standard deviations units (p .001) below their same grade to be, yet different-age counter part of older unequated SRP graduate classmates.

Spring- 1990

Further analysis of the data presented in Table 3 answers the 'research question' of how SRP graduates' second grade reading and mathematics SRA achievement score national percentile rankings compare with their fall 1987 and spring 1988 MRT national rankings both before and after their one year SRP extra year program.

> Have the extra year students maintained and sustained their enhanced and improved ranking (from the 32nd and 41st prior to SRP to the 81st and 84th ranking after SRP) since SRP graduation and now in second grade some two years after SRP?

The current 1990 spring second grade SRA achievement data suggest that the solid foundation (+ 1.5 SD of academic readiness superiority ahead of the younger promoted sample) laid during the extra year ('older to succeed') SRP program (Spring 1988) has dissipated to a -.4 SD delay. The spring 1990 SRA scores indicate that the promoted kindergartners (PRO) have established, since their spring of kindergarten disadvantaged position relative to the SRP sample, a statistically superior reading and quantitative composite ranking above their year older SRP graduate peers.

However, while the current 1990 spring SRA scores for the SRP graduates note statistically significant below-average regression of performance, relative to the promoted year younger PRO sample, the SRP sample's current SRA percentile ranking (63rd and 68th) are well above their fall 1987 MRT rankings (41st and 32nd percentile) prior to SRP placement.

Equated and Unequated Comparative Analysis of Second Grade SRA Outcomes

Table 4 presents the spring 1990 SRA data across several samples of students. The data indicate that the four samples of at risk students:

(SRP)- SRP recommended and placed students,
(SRP-NP)- SRP recommended and not placed students,
(HELDOUT)- those held out of kindergarten,
(RETAINED)- those students either retained in kindergarten, first or second grade,

note significantly lower achievement performance profiles (across language, math and reading SRA domains) than those of the promoted (PRO) students (not recommended for SRP) as well as the the district's average (DISTRICT) of all second graders taking the SRA. As a note, the SRA profiles of the four at risk study samples notes a skewed population of poorer academic students than the district mean scores for the 284 students taking the SRA Series, and as such reflects a 'restricted range' of students consistent with at-risk student populations. The only sample reflecting higher than the district's average scores are those of the promoted kindergartners.

Table 4 data answers the 'research question' of the two year longitudinal academic effects of an extra year transitional first grade program:

> Does an SRP transitional first program provide superior academic school performance (over the nonplaced SRP recommended students promoted and placed directly into first grade) some two years after SRP graduation?

Parents and administrates often wrestle with the SRP educational decision:

> "Should I or should I not placed this child?".
>
> "If I do, or if I do not place this child, what will be the expected academic outcome at the end of second grade for this child?"

The results of the SRA testing presented in Table 4 suggest that children who have spent an extra year in a child-centered transitional first grade SRP program do not profess a significant performance advantage, as measured by spring second grade SRA Achievement Series test results over those students eligible but non-placed. The SRP-NP sample were students who are ten months younger than the SRP students, yet who are equated to the SRP students as to their chronological age at entrance to kindergarten, their Gesell assessed developmental age administered during the spring of kindergarten and their spring, Gesell assessed developmental delay from their chronological age in kindergarten. This data suggests that SRP students (as a whole), have not afforded the "success" that the philosophy of 'older to succeed', promoted in their retention recommendation alleged.

Insert Table 4 about here

Teacher Ratings: Problematic Behaviors Rates Between the Study Samples

Another way in which outcome differences can be examined between the study samples is by analysis of the frequency and proportion of students that are rated by teachers as exhibiting classroom problematic behavioral characteristics. Table 5 presents the data from current second grade teacher ratings on domains indicative of problematic concerns and provides both the number and the percentage of students within the samples rated as exhibiting concerns in these areas. Only one domain difference reached significance, that of aggressiveness for the SRP sample.

Insert Table 5 about here

The findings presented as the number of students exhibiting the problematic concern, the proportion of students within that sample rated exhibiting problematic concerns, and the Chi-square statistic suggest that aggressive behavior as seen by second grade teachers is a significant concern among this SRP student sample in excess above that expected based upon the SRP non-placed, random and promoted sample findings.

Related Services

Outcome effects can be analyzed further by tabulating the frequency and proportion of students receiving related educational services. Table 6 presents the data from the related services analysis. The findings suggest that remedial reading services are a support service provided to both SRP samples (placed and not placed) in excess above that expected, based upon the random and promoted sample.

Insert Table 6 about here

The Chi-square analysis for related services found only one significant difference between the samples among these variables, and suggest that for both SRP and SRP-NP samples, extra remedial reading services are provided beyond those expected based on the services currently being received by the random and promoted samples.

Teacher Rating: Social and Academic Profiles

Table 7 presents the data from the teacher ratings and reflect both social-behavioral as well as academic domains. In the ANOVA comparisons between just the SRP and SRP-NP samples, the analyses did not reflect any statistical difference indicating that neither experimental SRP samples have a greater advantage or disadvantage in terms of their end of second grade academic or social

skills as rated by their teachers. The extra year older SRP sample of students reflect minimal, yet non significant advantages on the domains skills of social, performance, engagement, self-esteem, total composite, reading, academic total composite, and all around school progress, than the SRP-NP sample. However, the ten month younger SRP-NP students note a minimal, yet non significant advantages with the domains skills of success, attentiveness, math, and written language.

Insert Table 7 about here

Both the SRP and SRP-NP sample has three domain variables significantly different from the promoted sample.

Two Factor Factorial ANOVA Analysis

In analyzing a two factor ANOVA design for the two SRP samples (placed and not placed), where in there are two independent factors [gender (male/female) and SRP (placement/non-placement) both with two levels], the multivariate analysis did not indicate a significant main factor effect for either factor nor an AxB interaction effect (gender effect x placement), across all outcomes (SRA achievement, related services, problematic behavior and teacher rated domains) except for the single main factor effect of aggressive problematic behavior for the the SRP sample as noted above.

Further multivariate analysis was performed with a two factor factorial model adding aggressiveness and social problematic concerns as a main treatment effect with SRA placement/non-placement without the analysis indicating a significant interaction across the SRA academic outcome measures.

Correlation Data

Correlation data analysis can suggest which social, behavioral or test factors appear to be related to specific outcomes. Table 8 presents this data. Only a portion of the data is presented. In order to present all of the data however, dozens of correlation tables would have had to be presented, each with matrices of coefficients.

Insert Table 8 about here

The correlational data presented in Table 8 suggests the following non causal relationships:

Teacher Ratings (for all study sample students N of 113)

- a child's perceived aggressiveness negatively relates with SRA Language achievements (-.28)
- a child's perceived need for social-behavioral assistance negatively relates with achievement (-.32)
- a child's perceived need for academic assistance negatively relates with achievements (-.39)
- a child's reception of counseling skills services negatively relates with achievement (-.18)
- a child's teacher rated perceived social skills positively relates with reading skills (.35)
- a child's teacher rated adaptive behavioral skills positively relates with achievement (.43)
- a child's teacher rated 'engagement/involvement' skills positively relates with achievement (.43)
- a child's teacher rated 'success' experience within the classroom positively relates with reading achievement and was the highest correlate with achievement (.54)
- a child's teacher rated self-esteem positively relates with reading achievement (.44)

- a child's teacher rated attentiveness positively relates with reading achievement (.46)
- a child's teacher rated perceived need for social skills negatively relates with achievement (-.39)

Readiness Scores

Brigance K & 1st Screen (SRP placed students only)

- a child's Brigance K & 1st score given prior to kindergarten predicts 3 % of their second grade reading achievement (.18 four year predictive correlation)
- a child's Brigance K & 1st score has a .52 (.27 predictive) association two year predictive validity with the MRT Quantitative (Sp -88), using one year younger norms
- a child's Brigance K & 1st score has a -.54 one year predictive validity correlation with a Gesell CA-DA developmental delay statistic (.29 predictive association)
- a child's Brigance K & 1st score has a -.56 four year predictive validity correlation with academic problematic behaviors (.31 predictive ability)

Gesell Readiness Test Scores (SRP placed students only)

- a child's Gesell CA-DA statistic has a half year -.24 predictive validity correlation with the MRT quantitative score (6 % variance accounted)
- a child's Gesell CA-DA statistic has a one year -.55 predictive validity correlation with the MRT quantitative score (with one year younger K spring norms)
- a child's Gesell Dev. Age score has a one year -.50 predictive validity with the MRT quantitative score (using one year younger norms)
- a child's Gesell Dev. Age score has a three year .05 predictive validity with the SRA Total score

Metropolitan Readiness Tests Scores (SRP placed students only)

- a child's fall first grade MRT Reading score has three year predictively validity correlation with the SRA Reading score of .19, with one year in an extra year SRP program (.03 predictive association)
- a child's spring MRT Pre-Reading Composite has a two year predictive validity correlation with the SRA Total score of .27 (using one year younger K spring norms)
- a child's fall first grade MRT Quantitative has a three year predictively validity correlation with the SRA Math score of .02, with one year in an extra year SRP program

Problematic Concerns

- a child's second grade teacher rated problematic concerns in social behavior has a negative .39 relationship with SRA-Reading and -.41 with SRA-Total

- a child's second grade teacher rated problematic concerns in academic behavior has a negative .33 relationship with SRA-Reading and -.36 coefficient with SRA-Total

- a child's second grade teacher rated problematic concerns in aggressive behavior has a negative .36 relationship with SRA-Total while hyperactivity had a positive .06

Correlational Findings of Particular Interest

Several correlation statistics are of interest:

- the Gesell Developmental Delay (CA-DA) metric was found to predict SRA Reading some three years later at a .30 predictive value, higher than the Brigance at four years and the MRT at two and a

half years, all within the context of an extra year's placement for SRP placed students, while the Gesell Developmental Age score (in 3 month interval scaling) at the same time had a -.04 relationship with SRA Reading.

- the Brigance K & 1st Screen score was found to associate with the MRT Fall Composite score at a positive .40 correlational strength some one and a half years later, while the Gesell Developmental Age score was found to predict MRT Fall Composite some half year later at only a .11 level of strength, and that in a negative predictive direction.

- the Brigance K & 1st Screen predicted the Gesell developmental delay statistic at a .54 level of strength over one year.

- the Gesell Developmental Age score (which is a positive score metrics in 3 month intervals) was found to have a negative strong relationship with all of the MRT assessments, both fall and spring, on quantitative and reading outcomes.

- a SRP placed child's age tended to correlate -.40 with SRA Reading implying that older SRP placed children pose a more significant risk for school failure. When inspecting the population of all three 'extra year' student samples, this coefficient becomes a - .21, and with just the promoted and random sample of non extra year students (not at risk), this coefficient become a positive .18. Academic maturation within the at risk sample of students is clearly not a function of age, as it is within normal populations.

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Insert Table 9 about here

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At-Risk vs Regular Students

Table 9 displays the correlations differences between three sets (N's of 86, 46 and 49 respectfully) of data: a) the extra year populations SRP, HO and RETAINED; b) SRP only; and c) RANDOM only samples of non extra year students. The findings suggest that extra year at risk students do not profess the same correlates of social-behavioral indices (with SRA Reading), than regular students.

Multiple Regression Analysis

In a variety of cross breaks and selected ranges examining test data (Gesell, Brigance and MRT), and teacher rating scale data (success, self-esteem, problematic behaviors, etc), as well as other study variables, the predictive ability of the aggregate of data indices failed to provide more than a .48 adjust multiple R-square. Thus, in attempting to account for the predictive variance in SRA outcomes (Reading or Total) looking at the restricted sample range of SRP placed students only, this study failed to provide meaningful contributory variance predictors. The problem of multicollinearity was encountered with the teacher rating scale domains.

Discussion

Why Do SRP Non-Placed Students Do as Well in Second Grade as SRP Placed Students?

This study found a 'no difference' longitudinal effect in the researched comparison between the SRP and SRP-NP control samples across academic and social-behavioral domains except for the teacher rated problematic concern of aggressiveness, suggested for SRP placed students. There are several hypotheses which this investigator can put forth to explain this general 'no difference' finding. The hypotheses are:

a) - SRP readiness program placements result from assessed developmental readiness delays in very young students. This kindergarten assessed and alleged 'delay' may be a short-term artifact of children's unique developmental maturation process which tends to adjust over time to the learner's environment whether given the extra year and then placed in first grade, or placed directly ahead with the regular first grade class and not given an extra year (Fedoruk, 1989; Gallerani, O'Regan and Reinherz, 1982; Reynolds, 1984). Hence SRP placement or non placement students by second grade are not differentiated from each other in terms of academic or social outcomes (May and Welch, 1984a).

b) - The extra year 'time out' child-centered maturational SRP environment does not 'press' a child like a first grade curriculum or mastery learning environment does, and as such, SRP children may mature (in some non specific way) in their extra year but not gain academically related outcome skills that generalize past first grade. SRP placed children may become firmer with non specific skills, but by the end of second grade, no superior academic benefits are noticed over non SRP placed younger children. A SRP study in which SRP placed students received a mastery learning curriculum environment (with child specific academic and social domain contents) may present markedly different outcome findings than the present study (Carnine, Carnine, Karp & Weisberg, 1988, Winter; Day and Drake, 1986, November; Slavin and Madden, 1989, February).

c) - Parents and the home environment of non-placed SRP children may be different than parents of SRP placed children (Safer, Heaton and Allen, 1977, Siber, 1989). This difference may be due to pre-existing structures or interactive structures.

Pre-existing:

> Are there differences in the parental/home backgrounds between the two sets of SRP placed and nonplaced but eligible students at the time of placement or non placement?

SRP-NP parents may have demographic differences (e.g, education level, SES, etc.) than SRP parents. The parent survey however, provided to the study sample, although only establishing an average 35% return rate (SRP and SRP-NP), does not suggest an educational level of superiority for the SRP-NP parents. The survey outcome did not suggest statistically significant between group (SRP vs SRP-NP) differences on the domains of:

-maternal level of education
-paternal level of education
-occupational level of the 'head of household'
-parent perceived value of education for their child.

As such, the assumption is that there are not pre-existing differences, although until a respondent rate or demographic database can be established with close to a 100% recovery, this non difference cannot be truly established. Other studies have not found such differences however among kindergarten retentions (Shepard and Smith, 1989).

Interactive Structures

Perhaps SPR-NP parents take a more participatory involvement with their at risk child more than the SRP placed parents. SRP placed student's parents may take the view that the Gesellian extra year is 'all that is needed' for their child, as they have been told by maturational-nativists (Ames, Gillespie, Haines and Ilg, 1979; Gesell Institute of Human Development, 1982; Grant, 1986; Ilg, Ames, Haines and Gillespie, 1978), whereas the SRP nonplaced children's parents may take a more active interactivist role with their "at risk" child.

The parents of nonplaced but recommended children clearly tend to refuse SRP placement (in some cases classroom space was not available) and may take an active Remediationist, Diagnostic-Perscriptive, Interactionist or Cognitive-Constructivist view as opposed to a more maturational

view of 'hand-off'. Non placement parents may also want to "show the school a thing or two" by excelling their child's education above a school imposed 'at risk' status with supportive structures within the home.

The present study did not find a difference between the two samples on this domain of home learning activities given the 35% respondent rate. The survey findings also did not obtained statistical differences in:

-parent perceived level of the child's school progress
-parent perceived quality of education that the child has received
-parent perceived beneficial child-related educational decisions that they have made.

d) - The SRP children know in their mind that the SRP curriculum is going to be (and is) easier than the regular first grade program. It has been explained to them by their teachers and parents. As such, SRP children may tend to 'sit back' and coast through the SRP year affecting their 'educational mind set' and their first and second grade academic experience. Like the substitute teacher that comes into class the first day and takes it easy with the students, students may find it rough to 'get with it' if a new sub comes to class who demands a higher standard from the students.

The effect of 'failing' kindergarten may also play a role in the mind set of SRP placed students. Qualitative and quantitative studies (see Appendix A), profile a clear and pronounced subjective negative feelings on the part of many retained kindergartners. Even among SRP placed students, such students appear to know and feel that what they did in kindergarten was (in some way) not 'good enough' for first grade however "transitionalized" the child's individualized programming has been presented to them by nativist teachers and nurturing parents; runner-up's do get their consolations 'gifts', but also their subjective pains of 'loss' and 'failure' as examined in research studies (Finlayson, 1977; Holmes and Matthews, 1984; Plummer, Lineberger, Graziano, 1986; Smith and Shepard, 1987; Smith and Shepard, 1988; Shepard and Smith, 1989).

Such interactive structures of child-school may be present, although this study did not reveal a significant factor other than aggressiveness. Without pre SRP or non placement initial data, this present second grade aggressive difference (found between SRP and SRP-NP samples) cannot be attributed to SRP placements (e.g. "I failed, I am mad and now I am aggressive"), although a study on this hypothesis would be of interest, investigating both SRP placed and RETAINED (e.g., first grade) populations, compared with SRP-NP and random samples on the variable of aggressiveness, anger, self-doubt, etc.

The role of modeling may play an effect if, on the one hand delayed students placed in such SRP programs have delays due to behavioral and social issues that compound their's and other's academic performance profiles. The role of homogeneous grouping of 'delayed', 'unready' or immature' students into one class can effectively promote poor role modeling structures

e) - Despite efforts to equate comparative control groups (on age, developmental age and developmental delay), perhaps there just are unseen factors that are differential between SRP and non SRP children that favor non SRP placed children and disadvantage SRP placed students. Possibly the 1987 recommended and placed SRP students differ from the 1988 recommended and nonplaced SRP students on initial behavioral indices, such as aggressiveness and therefore this possible pre-existing social structure affected the longitudinal academic outcomes favoring SRP-NP students as a whole. (Improvement in the design methodology as constructed in 1987-88 could of accounted for this potential internal validity threat had research evaluative methodology collaborative services been sought at that time for the design of the SRP program evaluation.)

Among SRP nonplaced sample of students there are some students as early as first grade that are retained and hence, this SRP-NP population as evidenced by second grade placement, may progressively contain fewer non retained students within this promoted only SRP-NP sample who have <u>not</u> been retained, and thus represents the stratified 'best" from the original SRP-NP sample.

Therefore this SRP-NP sample may reflect a 'restricted range' sample of former SRP-NP students, although no in-district first grade SRP-NP students could be identified as having been retained.

f) - The no difference found is real, and SRP child centered extra year programs do not promote superior second grade academic or social-behavioral effects of students over eligible but nonplaced SRP recommended students.

Psychometrics of Readiness Scales

Measurement-based accountability concerns arise due to the weak and limited predictive validity correlations associated with the readiness test studied (Anastasi, 1988; Juel, & Leavell, 1989; Lange and Sapp, 1987; Meisels, 1987b; Meisels, 1989a; Satter, 1988; Shepard, 1989). Given the restricted range of the at risk sample, (that is the study samples tend to reflect a stratified sample of at risk students only), the correlation findings do not support their use as either a short-term (six months) or long-term (four years) predictive instruments. Be it the instruments themselves (Bredekamp and Shepard, 1988), the diverse and often complex developmental pace and facets of a children's early cognitive, social and achievement developmental growth patterns (Meisels, 1989a; Siber, 1989), test setting artifacts among young children (Wodtke, Harper, Schommer and Brunelli, 1989), test response artifacts among young children (Anastasi, 1988; Satter, 1988), early school stress (Blom, Cheney and Snoddy, 1986), and the often content mis-match between criterion-referenced tests and norm referenced tests (Linn, 1988),...regardless of the reason for their poor predictive validity, the public domain use of the three readiness instruments studied poses serious and invariable legal threats if placement or non placement decisions are based upon their use and their intent is to judge readiness for future school performance (Brandt, 1989; Kindergarten testings ends, 1988; Center for Law and Education, Inc., 1988, August; Olson, 1990; Ordovensky, 1989a; Rothman, 1990, May 2; Rothman, 1990, June 13; Testing of first graders restricted in Arizona, 1989; Transitional kindergarten programs may harm students Va. report says, 1990).

Further cause for caution with the use of readiness tests in early educational settings is the argument that a young child's exposure to personal, social, cultural, and educational opportunity plays a large and significant contributing influence and variance on readiness test score profiles (Bredekamp & Shepard, 1988; Garnier, 1990; Meisels, 1986, November; Meisels, 1989b; Neill & Medina, 1989). In non restrictive sampling distributions, upwards of forty percent of minorities reflect eligible criteria for kindergarten retention or SRP placement based upon readiness test scores' results. As such, abusive discriminatory practices are likely to result from the use of readiness tests (Kindergarten testing ends, 1988; NAEYC, 1988).

A Maturational Year is Not 'the' Answer

The present study supports the findings of some dozen other studies (e.g., Banerji, 1990; Gredler, 1984; Shepard and Smith, 1989) that there is no performance advantage in academics among SRP placed student samples versa those eligible but not placed as measured at the end of second grade. This study also furthers this non advantage finding to the domain areas of related services and social-behavioral indices. Moreover, in examining the SRA profiles of all three 'extra year' samples, all three of these extra year student populations reflected lower achievement second grade performance profiles than the promoted year younger profiles across the SRA academic domains studied. In addition, the correlations of extra year student's ages show an inverse relationship (-.21) with SRA achievement and suggest younger SRP extra year placed children do substantially better (-.40) than older SRP placed children.

If pullout compensatory extra year programs (Archambault, 1989; Jenkins, Pious and Peterson, 1988) are the only intervention alternative for such measurement-based (e.g., 'readiness' tests) at risk kindergarten judgments (using the Brigance, MRT or the Gesell as an example), the present study findings suggest that such extra year retained populations will continue to be at risk even with the extra year placement. Analysis of this study's subsample of retained and held out students (caveat excluded from the random or promoted samples) suggest that these extra year samples also

reflect poorer teacher rating and higher problematic and related services ratios than the promoted year younger samples. Additionally, SRP placed students are more at risk than the HELDOUT or RETAINED extra year populations as determined by this study's SRA outcomes. For the majority of extra year students, the gift of the extra year is better termed a 'buy a year' plan;...a "should" plan that did not.

In a subsample of caveat excluded ESL, non Caucasians, students receiving kindergarten special education services, and those students exhibiting physical handicapping conditions,...the mean average of this caveat excluded subsample's second grade SRA scores reflected higher SRA scores than the SRP placed sample across three of the four possible comparisons made with math skills slightly lower. Thus, SRP placed extra year students fair second grade achievement skills than a population of students usually referred to as 'at risk' for school failure.

The philosophy that at risk early education student "needs to be older" in order "to succeed" in school is not born out by the present research and all of the other controlled studies as well. School 'failure' (criterion judged as children below the district's mean average or the average of those promoted and not retained) is not prevented with SRP placement (Bocks. 1977; Caplan, 1973; Carstens, 1985; Koon, 1977; May and Welch, 1984b; Meisels, 1987a; Niklason, 1984; Overman, 1986, April; Plummer, Lineberger, Gradiano, 1986; Shepard and Smith, 1986).

In fact, retention in kindergarten actually increases the likelihood of future school failure. Among kindergarten retained populations, the likelihood of future school failure increases as much as 32 times over those not retained (Walsh, et al, 1990). Furthermore, research evidence suggest that the social, behavioral, academic, cognitive etc. determinants for kindergarten retention selection are very similar to SRP selected students (Mantzicopioulos, in press). Not withstanding the dozens of educational associations, states that have rebuked the concept of early grade retention (flunking) as an worthwhile educational intervention (e.g., Byrnes and Yamamoto, 1986; Cohen, 1990; Doyle, 1989, November; Frymier, 1989, December 6; Marzullo, 1990, February; Mc Nergney, 1989, November; Niklason, 1984; National Association of School Psychologists, 1988; Olsen, 1989; Rothman, 1990, May 2; Rothman, 1990, June 13; Transitional kindergarten programs may harm students Va. Report says, 1990, April 6),...the vast majority of students within early extra year samples remain educationally and socially at risk soon after their retention year, and repeatedly get referred to support service programs in statistically higher proportions than promoted year younger students as evidenced in this study as well as others (Shepard and Smith, 1989).

Extra year "educational" placement policies clearly appear to be an inefficient educational policy practice (often noted by school board policy guarding against such practices), and further, poses serious legal issues arising from the lack of accountability for such unsound, un-educating practices. As Shepard has recently concluded from her comprehensive review of the kindergarten retention literature (In Shepard and Smith, p 75-76), "Children who spend an extra year before first grade are just as likely to end up at the bottom of their first or third grade class as unready children who refused the special placement." Shepard further notes (p 76), "In this respect retention, whether it is called by a special name (transition), occurs for special reason (immaturity), or takes place in kindergarten rather than later, is still retention - and still ineffective."

Maturationists are simply and woefully wrong for the majority of students whom they retain. An extra growth year does not promote long-term success (e.g., 'a solid foundation will be laid for future success in school experiences') nor remediate non maturational deficients. Districts which have retention policies which support retention as a "gift of time", or view it as "an important alternative" run a risk of pernicious accountability and liability issues (Shepard and Smith, 1989, p. 212).

The assumption that 'unready students' need a retention year of school in order to be ready is a false hope for most retained students and clearly a nativist 'philosophy of practice' not supported by conventional wisdom or consistent, unequivocal unanimous self-evident research evidence (Doyle,

1989, November; Schultz, 1989; Shepard and Smith, 1989). What they, the majority need and are not getting is constructive, specific in-class intervention (Levin, 1989; Slavin, Karweit and Madden, 1989).

SRP Successful for a Small Minority

Within extra year student samples, there is a specific characteristically undetermined student sample dictated (without a present predictive basis for the specifics of whom this minority outcome is) by norm distribution theory, that are maintaining their educational performance above the norm average (Niklason, 1987). An analysis of the variance distribution among SRP placed student's second grade SRA scores, found some 36 percent were at or above the district's mean SRA Total achievement and some 34 percent were above the promoted sample's mean. Among the SRP-NP sample, the respective percent achieving at the district and the promoted mean performance level was 31 and 30 percent. However, half of these SRP placed students started their SRP year at the performance level of above the mean average of the advanced promoted sample.

As a pre SRP comparative statistic, of the SRP sample in the fall of 1987, examining MRT Pre-Reading Composite distributions, some 16 percent (seven students) of the 44 students were achieving at or above of the promoted first grader's mean average of the 70th percentile. Thus, although twice (fifteen students) as many SRP placed students are now functioning at the promoted sample's average level of current SRA-Total performance (of 78th percentile ranking) as prior to SRP placement, only eight students improved their standing from below average to above average. This still leaves some 65 percent of the year older population functioning at less than the year younger promoted student's mean average in second grade only two years after their SRP placement.

In the present study, SRP placement improved the standing of eight students not at the mean level (of those promoted) in fall of 1987. These eight students represent just 21 percent, or one fifth of the SRP placed students in 1987 who were eligible to progress from below average (in fall of 1987) and sustain above average status through second grade being a year older than their comparative peers. Yet, at the end of their SRP year in spring of 1988, 43 out of 44 (98 percent) students were functioning at or above the mean of their newly promoted kindergarten younger classmates (59th percentile mean ranking) as measured by the MRT Pre-Reading Composite (PRC). Thus some sixty-three percent of SRP placed students dropped from a superior ranking of above average (in spring of their SRP year), to a ranking below average in second grade.

The 'replacement' model of providing an extra year as a 'gift year' appears valuable to about one fifth of all students retained, with another one fifth being placed who were functioning above average to begin with. This small population of 'success if older', represents the exception to the retention option (Olsen, 1989), yet must be accounted for in some way. Without the contextual background structures referred to in the methodology section, this present study fails to account for this variance. The thesis of Shepard and Smith (1989, p. 235) that "...prediction of which child will benefit from retention is currently beyond the ability of educators.", although inviting to this author to solidly disprove such a position, remains a fact which further studies may provide a rebuttal to such a thesis. There is no doubt in the author's present mind set that a SRP extra year program appears to benefit a small portion (around one fifth) of 'at risk' students. However, who are these students and might this benefit have been obtained in a collaborative and cooperative setting other than a pullout year?

In response to the question of who these successful SRP students are, the author has set up a matrices of four subsamples of SRP placed students each with 5-9 students within a set for an enthographic (child, home and school) study (Anderson, 1989; Jacob, 1987) to be conducted over the summer/fall and involving the second grade teachers when they get back from summer vacation. See Table 10 for the sets.

Insert Table 10 about here

This effort will investigate the characteristics and difference between those SRP placed students that started their fall 1987 SRP placement year as:

- unready, but are now succeeding at the end of second grade
- unready, and still are not succeeding
- ready, and still are succeeding
- ready, but are not now succeeding.

Additional investigation will inspect a similar matrices for SRP-NP students

Research efforts need to clarify the labyrinthine of reasons for the readiness 'delayed' assessed in spring kindergarten students. It is clear, that maturation alone is not the answer for the majority (some eighty percent) of SRP placed 'developmentally' delayed students. Providing an extra year of school without individualized interventions specific to a child's unique needs or profile of strengths or weaknesses (for which the spring kindergarten academic/readiness delays are assumed to have resulted from) is akin to placing a 'special education child' in a generic classroom, providing generic non specific regular instructional interventions and philosophizing that the special 'immature' child should improve after this one year 'program' without determining the reason for the original placement or the specifics of the child's remedial intervention. Such 'efforts' do not reflect a sound educational practice, but is exactly what SRP programs appear to be: a blind non prescriptive prescription with placebo effects assisting some one fifth of those placed.

Alternative to SRP Placements

The vast monetary and personnel efforts reflected in SRP extra year programs may better serve at risk students in other than such one year homogeneous grouped programs which are not directed towards specific remedial efforts. As Slavin and Madden have noted (Slavin, Karweit, & Madden, 1989; Slavin & Madden, 1989)), the vast majority of at risk students by the end of elementary school have been retained at least once (at a school expense investment lost in two years), yet still remain at risk at a social expense. In secondary school age children, extra year students represent the vast majority of delinquent court adjudicated youths (Hawkins and Lam, 1986).

Whether it be with Chapter One service programs, full-day kindergarten programs, pre kindergarten developmental 'head start' programs, retention practices, or SRP programs, the preponderance of pullout outcome studies note that one to two years after 'pullout' intervention, the gain effects have generally disappeared and the student is 'at risk' again (Slavin and Madden, 1989, February). Growing educational and hopefully educator's awareness of the ineffectiveness and wishfulness of extra year programs, which:

at best, provides no effect after two years, and

at worst, provides a poor instructional match with a child's academic and or social needs, label students, segregate students and disrupt student's education and social progress,

has led most educators to seriously reconsider extra year compensatory programs in educational settings (Archambault, 1989; Madden and Slavin, 1989; Olsen, 1990).

The legitimate question can be raised as to the specific educational 'intervention' undertaken in a retention year? What are the components of the educational practice other than the 'extra' year? Extra year of what? The assumption that retained students will mature, master deficient skills and be less likely to fail latter on in school is clearly false, documented by unequivocal, consistent and pervasive research findings.

The concept of 'retention' (retaining/flunking students), is currently under severe reconsideration

of the policy and practice in any educational setting, with dozens of organizations, publications, associations condemning it. (See references for citations.) The practice of 'extra year' interventions is however, wide spread and in the present study, close to forty (40) percent of the district's second grade student population (when adding ESL, non Caucasian, special education students, physically handicapped students and inter district transfer students) have 'repeated' a year of school by the spring of second grade. Aggregating these extra year samples suggest significant lower average SRA achievement score profiles than the year younger promoted only students or the district's mean average.

Moving from Ineffective to Effective Practices for At Risk Students

Among such considerations for effective early (preschool, kindergarten, and first grade) education interventions, the program (Karweit, 1989a; Karweit, 1989b) dynamics reflect the following:

- provide immediate and intensive intervention within the class setting,
- frequently assess student progress and make classroom changes, directed by the teacher
- interventions are intensive and use one-to-one or small group instructional formats (pay for with the monies saved in no retentions),
- gear curriculum to the specifics of the child's assessed weaknesses,
- frequently use computer-assisted programming,
- tend to concentrate on reading skills,
- use cooperative learning models and collaborative remedial assistance provided within the classroom,
- opt for effective classroom changes prior to remedial interventions or assistance,
- support additional supplemental resources for impact assistance within the classroom,
- promote an overview school goal/objective that ensures commitment for/to each child's success in school within the regular class,
- provide remedial programs which are comprehensive and are well planned not uni-dimensional, including home/parental involvements,
- support such in-class changes with resources to encourage and construct such efforts.

Among some of these programs, the dynamics of the programs have included:

- 1st and 2nd grade classrooms with the same teacher over the course of two years, in smaller than average teacher ratio.classroom sizes,
- parent volunteers in the classroom on a regular basis,
- provide cross age tutoring in the class on a regular basis,
- develop cooperative classroom structures with one at risk, one average and one high achieving student networked together for 'upward' team modeling, rather than homogeneous 'downward' grouping/tracking of 'lower' kids.

Policy Decisions Related to Early Educational Services for At Risk Students

It is not the intent of this author to specifically define or suggest any policies or procedures regarding early educational services 'ear marked' for at risk students in general or in any specific case. Any adoption of a policy or procedure related to this study's outcome should be considerate of the public dimension and puralistic dynamics of public education and the articulated, stated goals and board policy of the local school board and their advisory processes. The question of proposed or alleged effects of a planned intervention decision for an 'at risk' child combines and involves the collaborate and interactivist surroundings of that child's unique set of contextual structures.

However planned or unplanned, (research based on non researched based,) sound or unsound, the eventually goal of any intervention is to encourage and empower all students to assume, strive and obtain a greater positive role (Glasser. 1990) and control within their academic life for appropriate and better learning achievement.

Conclusions

This present study investigated the outcome data obtained from six sample populations consisting of four at risk samples and two non at risk samples. Comparative SRP and non SRP placed samples were equated on sex, chronological age at entrance to kindergarten, Gesell School Readiness Test scores and a developmental delay statistic. The role of teacher rated student social, problematic, behavioral, motivation, success, self-esteem, classroom participation and engagement domains, as well as selected demographic background variables were examined along with second grade standardized achievement outcomes. In addition, referral and placement rates were profiled for support educational services of special services, remedial reading, Chapter I, social skills and counseling across the samples. Parent surveys examined the role of parental level of education, attitudes and other contextual factors.

Controlled analysis noted non significant academic outcomes differences between SRP placed and nonplaced samples. Validity indices reflected poor predictive readiness assessment instruments correlations with half, one year and three-four year second grade standardized achievement results. Findings suggest that extra year students fair lower achievement and teacher ratings than random or promoted year younger students. Students recommended for SRP placement yet not placed in comparison with the year older SRP placed students did not exhibit significant differences across achievement, related services, parental factors nor teacher rating outcomes favoring the SRP placed older students. Among SRP placed students only one fifth of those eligible to improve their relative achievement standing to the mean level of achievement in second grade did so. Among SRP placed students, ninety-eight percent attained above the mean average of their new kindergarten promoted year younger classmates after their SRP year, yet sixty-five percent of these students dropped back to a below average status by the end of second grade dissipating their SRP treatment effect in less than two years. The results of this study support the unanimous findings of all other controlled study findings of a no treatment effort for SRP placed students past the first grade. Recommendations for proscriptive concerns are provided along with policy cautions.

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Table 1

Demographics Statistics

	SRP	SRP-NP	HELDOUT	RETAINED	RANDOM	PRO
Sample Size	46	20	16	24	18	31
Male	23	10	10	15	10	14
Female	23	10	6	9	8	17
Age	104.15	94.65	103.31	105.83	97.11	96.48
Free/Reduced	10/.22	3/.15	NA	NA	1/.06	4/.13

Table 2

Initial Status of Samples

Group	N	Gesell Readiness Score	Developmental Delay
SRP Placed	38	64.00 (.60)	7.11 (.70)
SRP Nonplaced	19	64.42 (.70)	7.95 (1.07)

Table 3

Unequated Control Group Comparisons

	Metropolitan Readiness Tests				SRA Achievement	
	Fall 1987		Spring 1988		Spring 1990	
GROUP N	Reading	Quantitative	Reading	Quantitative	Reading	Math
SRP 44	41.12 (3.34)	32.00 (2.57)	64.14 (1.79)	61.18 (3.33)	63.19 (3.86)	67.81 (3.71)
PRO 31	NA	NA	59.03 (3.96)	62.32 (4.16)	76.90 (2.97)	74.45 (3.28)
FIRST 48	70.30 (3.09)	70.40 (3.66)	NA	NA	NA	NA

Table 4

SRA Outcomes

	Study Samples						
Variable	SRP (SEM)	SRP-NP	HELDOUT	RETAINED	RANDOM	PROMOTED	DISTRICT
SRA-Language(3,4,5,6,7)	56.23 (4.24)	50.75 (4.70)	67.06	64.83	66.94	76.07	71.00
SRA-Math	67.81 (3.71)	63.25 (5.30)	72.25	71.65	68.59	74.45	77.00
SRA-Reading (1,2)	63.19 (3.86)	61.83 (4.84)	68.47	67.00	67.12	76.90	75.00
SRA-Total (8,9)	65.50 (4.03)	61.11 (5.01)	72.67	72.41	70.35	79.47	78.00

Significance Testing Between All Study Sample Groups with Fisher's Protected LSD:

1) SRP vs. PRO at $p \leq .05$
2) SRP-NP vs. PRO at $p \leq .05$
3) SRP vs. PRO at $p \leq .05$
4) SRO vs. R at $p \leq .05$
5) SRP-NP vs. HO at $p \leq .05$
6) SRP-NP vs. PRO at $p \leq .05$
7) SRP-NP vs. R at $p \leq .05$
8) SRP vs. PRO at $p \leq .05$
9) SRP-NP vs PRO at $p \leq .05$

Significance Testing Between SRP and SRP-NP Only Samples:- All comparisons were non significant

Table 5

Problematic Behaviors

DOMAIN	SRP	SRP-NP	RANDOM	PROMOTED
Hyperactivity	4/.09	1/.05	3/.16	2/.06
Aggressiveness (1,2)	13/.28	1/.05	2/.11	0/.0
Behavior Assistance	14/.30	5/.25	3/.16	8/.26
Academic Assistance	14/.30	7/.35	4/.21	5/.16

Chi-Square significance testing between the four study samples:

1) Total Chi-Square $p \leq .002$ for all groups.

2) SRP vs. SRP-NP only Chi Square $p \leq .03$.

Table 6

Related Services Outcomes

VARIABLE	SRP	SRP-NP	RANDOM	PROMOTED
Sp. Ed. Referral	9/.20	3/.15	0/.0	3/.10
Sp. Ed. Placement	5/.11	2/.10	0/.0	1/.03
Social Skills	8/.17	2/.10	0/.0	3/.10
Elementary Counselor	5/.11	2/.10	0/.0	0/.0
Remedial Reading (1)	18/.39	9/.45	3/.16	3/.10

Chi-Square significance testing between the four study samples.:

1) Total Chi-Square $p \leq .007$

Table 7

Teacher Ratings: Social and Academic Skills

VARIABLE	SRP	SRP-NP	RANDOM	PROMOTED
Social Skills	17.58 (.70)	17.45 (.82)	16.94	19.52
Performance	17.58 (.89)	16.75 (1.42)	16.88	18.65
Engagement	19.02 (.75)	17.75 (1.09)	17.47	20.06
Success	18.11 (.84)	18.30 (.94)	18.12	20.23
Self-Esteem (2,3)	17.76 (.76)	17.45 (.92)	17.88	20.35
Attentiveness	16.42 (.86)	16.95 (1.40)	15.59	18.26
Total Composite	107.51 (4.23)	105.39 (5.60)	101.88	116.81
Reading Skills (4)	5.69 (.29)	5.50 (.43)	6.35	6.58
Math Skills	5.80 (.25)	5.90 (.32)	5.94	6.48
Lang. Skills (5)	5.27 (.28)	5.35 (.39)	6.00	6.29
Academic Total (6)	16.76 (.78)	16.75 (1.09)	18.24	19.35
Progress-School (1)	3.93 (.17)	3.55 (.22)	3.94	4.19

Significance Testing Between All Study Sample Groups with Fisher Protected LSD:

1) SRP-NP vs. PRO at $p \leq .05$
2) SRP-NP vs. PRO at $p \leq .05$
3) SRP vs. PRO at $p \leq .05$
4) SRP-NP vs. PRO at $p \leq .05$
5) SRP vs. PRO at $p \leq .05$
6) SRP vs. PRO at $p \leq .05$

Table 8

Correlations Values Obtained

Variable	Variable	r	N	Notes
Aggressiveness	w/ SRA- Language	-.28	N of 113	All Four At Risk samples
Assistance for Social Beh.	w/ SRA- Total	-.32	N of 113	"
Assistance for Academics	w/ SRA- Total	-.39	N of 113	"
Counseling & Social Skills	w/ Achievement	-.18	N of 113	"
Social Skills	w/ SRA- Reading	.35	N of 115	"
Performance Skills	w/ SRA- Total	.43	N of 115	"
Engagement Skills	w/ SRA- Total	.43	N of 115	"
Success Experience	w/ SRA- Reading	.54	N of 115	"
Self-Esteem Skills	w/ SRA- Reading	.44	N of 115	"
Attentiveness Skills	w/ SRA- Reading	.46	N of 115	"
Brigance K & 1st	w/ SRA- Reading	.18	N of 38	Brigance given 4/86, SRP only/ 4 year Predictive Validity (PV)
Gesell Dev. Delay (CA-DA)	w/ SRA- Reading	-.30	N of 38	Gesell given 4/87, SRP only 3 year PV
Brigance K & 1st	w/ Gesell Dev. Delay	-.54	N of 38	Just SRP sample/ 1 year PV
MRT - Quant. Spring 88	w/ SRA- Language	.23	N of 38	" / 2 year PV
MRT -Reading Spring 88	w/ SRA- Total	.27	N of 38	" / 2 year PV
Gesell Dev. Delay (CA-DA)	w/ MRT Quant.Fall 87	-.24	N of 38	Just SRP sample/ 6 months PV
MRT - Quant. Fall 87	w/ SRA- Math	.02	N of 38	" / 2 year PV
MRT - Reading Fall 87	w/ SRA- Reading	.19	N of 38	" / 2 1/2 year PV
Gesell Dev. Delay	w/ MRT- Quant. Sp 88	-.55	N of 38	" / 1 year PV
Gesell Dev. Age	w/ MRT- Quant. Sp 88	-.50	N of 38	" / 1 year PV
Brigance Score	w/ MRT- Quant. Sp 88	.52	N of 38	" / 2 year PV
MRT - Reading Spring 88	w/ SRA- Reading	.37	N of 38	" / 2 year PV
Gesell Dev. Delay (CA-DA)	w/ MRT- Reading F87	-.24	N of 38	"/ half year PV
Gesell Dev. Age	w/ SRA-Total	.05	N of 38	"/ 3 year PV
Social Problematic Beh.	w/ SRA -Total	-.44	N of 46	"/SRB coded as nominal data
Brigance Score.	w/ Acs. Probl. Beh.	-.56	N of 38	"/APB coded as nominal data
Social Problematic Beh.	w/ SRA- Reading	-.39	N of 46	" / SPB coded as nominal data
Aggressive Prob. Beh.	w/ SRA-Total	-.36	N of 46	"/APB coded as nominal data
Hyperactive Prob. Beh.	w/ SRA-Total	.06	N of 46	SRP only sample
Attentiveness Rating	w/ SRA-Math	.56	N of 46	"
Brigance Score	w/ MRT- ReadingF87	.40	N of 38	"
Child's Age (Months)	w/ SRA-Reading	-.40	N of 46	"
Child's Age (Months)	w/ SRA-Reading	-.21	N of 86	SRP, RETAINED & HELDOUT Only
Child's Age (Months)	w/ SRA-Reading	.18	N of 49	RANDOM & PROMOTED only

Note: Gesell developmental delay (CA-DA) statistic is a scale with the higher numerical value signifying a greater delay in age appropriate readiness skills based upon the Gesell assessment. All nominal scales were coded '0' if not indicative of a problematic concern and '1' if present as rated by the teacher.

Table 9

At Risk, SRP and Random Samples

	At-Risk	SRP	Random
Variable	r	r	r
Social Skills	.22	.25	.52
Adpative Behavioral.	.30	.33	.62
Engagement/Participatory	.24	.27	.59
Success Experience	.44	.45	.67
Self-Esteem	.32	.35	.59
Attentiveness/Listening	.34	.38	.69
Hyperactivity	.02	-.05	-.50
Aggressiveness	-.30	-.38	-.23
Social Problematic Beh.	-.32	-.44	-.37
Academic Problematic Beh.	-.22	-.29	-.55
Child's Age (months) .	-.31	-.20	.18

Table 10

Enthnography Study Sets

	1987 FALL MTR READING	1990 SPRING SRA
SET A: LOW-LOW	Less than 41	Less than 57
SET B: LOW-HIGH	Less than 42	Greater than 62
SET C: HIGH-HIGH	Greater than 50	Greater than 73
SET D: HIGH-LOW	Greater than 42	Less than 62

Appendix A

Review of Transitional First Grade Program Outcome Research

Dr. Phil Ferguson

Introduction

SRP Longitudinal Outcome Research Studies

Research studies on the assumed educational benefits of SRP programs set up an experimental design in which SRP students and non SRP placed students are followed over the course of their first few years in school via quasi-experimental design or ex post facto designed analysis. Often times however, these studies are experimentally flawed or weak using unequated or poorly controlled design methodology. An example of a study with a with poor design is one in which extra year students are compared with same grade, yet year younger non SRP recommended students without initial comparative data between the two samples.

An example of a SRP placement investigation from a tightly controlled design methodology is one in which extra year transitional first grade placed students have been matched, paired or equated to recommended SRP placement students not placed using a variety of variables to ex post facto equate two groups of students on the most of the following variables:

-socioeconomic status,
-intelligence,
-rural or urban geographic location,
-proportion of enrolled students in free or reduced lunch,
-ethnic origin,
-gender,
-chronological age at time of school entrance,
-a pre-academic measure(s) of achievement (e.g., Stanford Early School Achievement Tests, Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills),
-kindergarten readiness assessment (Gesell Developmental Test, The Santa Clara Inventory, Metropolitan Readiness Tests, etc.),
-and first language dominance.

The following is a listing of the research studies specific to SRP only programs:

Leinhardt, 1980 (SRP) J. of Ed. Psych. 72, 55-61."Transition rooms:.."
Bell, 1972.(SRP) Wayne State Univ. (Dissertation) "A study of the readiness..."
Matthews, 1977(SRP) St. Louis Univ. (Dissertation) "The effects of transition.."
Raygor, 1972, (SRP) Univ. of Minn. (Dissertation) "A five year..."
Talmadge, 1981 (SRP) Univ. of Oregon (Dissertation) Descriptive and..."
Kilby, 1982,(SRP) Univ. of S. Dakota (Dissertation) "An ex post facto ..."
Jones, 1985, (SRP) North Arizona Univ. (Dissertation) The effect of a transition.."
May & Welch, 1985, (SRP) Psych. in the Schools, 21, 381-5 "The effects of..."
Caggiano, 1984, (SRP) Temple Univ. (Dissertation) "A study of ..."
Kirkwood School District, 1984 (SRP) "Evaluation of Transition Room"
Mossburg, 1987 (SRP) Ball State Univ. (Dissertation) "The effects of transition..."
Dolan, 1982, (SRP) Exceptional Child, 29, pp.101-10 "A follow-up evaluation..."
Hunter, 1975, (SRP) Ball State Univ. (Dissertation) "An evaluation of the ..."
Beckman & Reinert, 1985, (SRP) ERS Spectrum, 3, 44-46 "Evaluation of a..."
Sheets, 1977, (SRP) Univ. of N Iowa (research paper) "Early recognition:..."
Wilson & Hewett, 1978, (SRP) AERA paper "Long-term effects..."

Brevard County Public Schools, 1987 (SRP) "Developmental placement..."
Duhe, Green, Taylor, Frank, & Dunlap, 1984, (SRP) St. Charles Parish Public Schools "Report on Developmental Placement"
Ford, 1985, (SRP). Norman Public Schools (research paper) "The transitional ..."
Banerji, 1990 (SRP) AERA presentation "Longitudinal effects of..."
Zinski, (1983), (SRP). Research Bulletin-Florida Educational and Research Council, 17, 1-51 "A study of the effects of a pre-first..."
Wilson, Anderson & Hewitt, 1981, (SRP) AERA presentation. " The evaluation of transition..."

Recent 'in preparation' SRP Studies:

See: Mantzicopoulos (1990, Summer, personal communication) a three year longitudinal follow-up study of SRP students
Walsh, et al., (1990), see also "Transitional kindergarten.."..(1990, June 6) the Virginia Dept of Education study of 55 districts.

Note: Kindergarten retention studies are not included in this list, although in actuality there may be some kindergarten retention programs that are very similar to SRP program in curriculum, instructional and procedural design implementing.

SRP Outcome Research Review Articles

The citations listed below note the SRP review literature. Beyond the SRP comparative outcome studies, further SRP investigations have undertaken to examine or discuss the policy and practices within SRP extra year placement settings in terms of teacher, administration, student and parent beliefs, perceptions and decision support systems surrounding SRP programs. The following is a listing of specific research review articles and publications on SRP programs (except Jackson, 1975).

Gredler's 1984 Psychology in the Schools, 21 463-70 "Transitional classes: ...."
Jackson, 1975 Review of Educational Research, 45, 613-35 "The research evidence..."
Shepard and Smith, 1987, Psychology in the Schools, 24, 346-57 "Effects of..."
Shepard and Smith (1989) Flunking grades.(The Falmer Press) Chapter 4 "A review...
Sandoval & Fitzgerald 1985, Psychology in the Schools, 22, 164-70 "A high school..."
May & Welch, 1984, J of Learning Disability, 17, 338-41 "The effect of..."

SRP Discussion Review Articles

In addition to the reviews of the SRP research literature, there is a wide body of educational articles rhetorically discussing the perceived merits or flaws of SRP programs, although many of these articles discuss other topics (e.g., psychometrics of readiness tests, kindergarten curriculum, other extra year programs,), in addition to specific SRP programs: e.g., -

Ames, L. B. (1980, December). Early Years, 10-11. "Retention in grade can be..."
Bredekamp & Shepard (1988) Young Children, 43(3) 14-24 "How best to.."
Galloway & George (1986). Educational Leadership 44, 68-69. "Junior kindergarten"
May & Welch, (1984), Psychology in the Schools, 21, 381-385 "The effects of.."
Meisels, (1987) Young Children, 42(2) 4-6,68-73. "Uses and abuses..."
Meisels, (1989) Educational Leadership, 46(7), 16-22 "High-stakes testing..."
Shepard & Smith, (1986) Educational Leadership, 41, (November), 78-8 "Synthesis of.."

The prevalence of the transitional year practice in districts is found in fewer than 40% of all districts and the enrollment rates ranges from a low of a 1-2% of all kindergarten student placed in school readiness programs to as high as fifty percent of all entering first grade students in some

districts. The curriculum in SRP programs also reflect a range from pre-special service interactionist-interventionlist orientations, to the more typical maturational growth year child-centered instructional curriculums.

A review of the characteristics of SRP placed students (as opposed to student not placed) suggest that SRP students tend to be:

> male, younger in age, of lower socioeconomic status, of lower intelligence, tend to minority children, reflect problematic behavioral-social and immature behaviors, perceptual organization problems (such as spatial, temporal and visual-motor integration), and children lagging on pre-academic measures of achievement

(Caplin, 1973; Gallerani, O' Regan & Reinhertz, 1982; Mantzicopoulos, Morrison, Hinshaw, & Carte, 1989; Safer, Heaton & Allen, 1977; Sandoval & Hughes, 1982; Smith & Shepard, 1987).

Review of Transitional First Grade Outcome Studies

For further discussion and a related review, see the review in Shepard and Smith (1989, Chapter 4) entitled "A review of research on kindergarten retention", from which a portion of this review is adaptive.

In brief review, 'transitional first grade program' studies tend to note the following findings, conclusions and discussions:

- among all of the controlled studies, not one finds a superior academic performance for the SRP placed students vs those eligible recommended students past the first grade.

- extra year SRP students do not support statistically superior academic performance past first grade than eligible equated control group nonplaced students (placed directly in regular first grade classrooms); this is the finding with the majority of controlled experimental studies and the majority of studies best supported by research design.

- the few studies that do find a superior academic performance after SRP placement, do not generally find this achievement past the second year, with equivalent academic performance being obtained by the controls in the third grade; and, these studies tend not to provide initial readiness or achievement data to evaluated the equatedness of the two groups.

- a few studies examined transitional room children with supportive remedial services and found these students were no better off at the end of first grade academically than equated students promoted to first grade not receiving special instruction.

- even transitional room study sites identified by the Gesell Institute did not support superior findings past second grade.

- in studies that note readiness room children beginning academic and/or readiness performance advantages (although non statistical) prior to SRP placement in comparison to the control groups, the outcome findings after the SRP placement report no significant superior performance past second grade, for this initial advantaged SRP sample of students.

- a few studies that have examiner social and behavioral outcomes note significantly lower/poorer outcomes for those SRP placed than those not placed as rated by first to fifth grade teachers.

- the few studies that support first and second year positive outcomes for extra year students tend to be studies of minimal experimental control methodology where initial sample comparisons prior to SRP or non SRP placement were not established; they also reflect fewer students in the experimental group, report fewer need for special services post SRP, and tended to be conducted in high

socioeconomic communities, provide extra support to SRP students during SRP programs, and reflect district level, not dissertation studies.

- readiness room placements do not reduce grade retention rates. Among kindergarten retained students,....100% of them are given an extra year and among kindergarten retention/eligible but nonplaced students, less than 40% eventually get retained, thus implying some 60% or more of kindergarten placed students were placed to forestall a subsequent retention that would not have happened. (Most kindergarten retention
eligible samples reflect less than eight percent of the total kindergarten population.)

- schools (and teachers) tend to differ on why they tend to retain students; ...some do more so based upon the child's age and sex of the child, some more on readiness measures, others because of 'perceived' immaturity within the child.

- actual SRP placement decision procedures tend to differ from written district policy guidelines and tend to follow teacher's personal beliefs/persuasion; Nativist and Maturationalist tend to retain high proportion of students, while Remediationist, Diagnostic-Perscriptive, Interactionist and Cognitive-Constructivist tend not to retain many students.

- analysis of SRP placement guidelines and actual practices note idiosyncrasies, arbitrariness, inconsistencies and anomalies.

- clinical interview studies note that early education teachers (K& 1st) of a strong nativist-maturationalist persuasion (based upon interview data), on the average hold back around 30% of their students, while other teachers of a strong remediationists' view (established by interview), tended to hold back around 2 percent.

- some 40 percent of SRP students are rated by first grade teachers as below average in 'social-maturity', despite being some 8-10 months older than their average-age classmates,- implying that the 'immaturity' that placed them into SRP programs, may be a relatively enduring personality trait, related to other factors not maturational in design, since one year later, they are still 'immature'.

- the young immature 'not ready' spring kindergarten (SRP or non SRP placed) child may be a child who's young and immature characteristics stays with that children and as such, the characteristics are not related to nor reflective of maturation since many SRP graduates still get rated as immature (in 5th grade) post SRP, as do many non SRP placement students characterized as immature in kindergarten.

- parent ratings of their children at the end of first grade among SRP and SRP-NP, placed students suggest slight non significant better attitudes among SRP-NP students than SRP students as judged by their parents.

- parents of SRP placed students tend to express overall positive effectiveness of the SRP experience for their children, a largely positive program endorsement by parent of SRP placed students; however, parent comments also note negative experiences, with some 20% of parents describing pervasively overall negative effects (consistent with other parent surveys on early grade retentions).

- clinical interviews with retained SRP children (during SRP year and in reflective first grade case studies) show patterns of consistent evidence of student's subjective feelings of personal failure, 'funking', disappointing parents, self-doubt, lost, shame, punishment, humiliation, being teased, not being quite as good as others, not being good enough for first grade, going to SRP because I didn't do good in school, etc. despite the overwhelming support and attitude for the concept of SRP among parents and 'transitional philosophy' methodologies; in other words ask most SRP placed student why they are going into SRP and they tend to tell and reflect a perceived sense of self 'failure' in their first year of school.

- extra year SRP students were no different on teacher rating measures of social maturity, learner's self-concept, or 'attention' than non-placed SRP students at the end of first grade.

Other Comments Regarding SRP Programs:

- the average SRP program tends to SRP about 5-8% of its kindergarten population.

- the very existence of SRP programs may tend to promoted an increasing specific academically demanding 'regular' curriculum in first grade:

There may be little fostering of emerging new cognitive-constructivist conceptions of the young diversity laden learner in kindergarten or first grade classroom learning environments. Why? Because they (kindergarten and first grade teachers in schools with SRP programs), do not have to adapt to their incoming child's learning style or learner's construct of orientation. Why? Because, the SRP programs are supposed to take care of the child's "immaturity" and non ready 'ills', which of course is not related at all to the demands and the often staid curriculum of or instructional learner's environment in kindergarten or first grade. And for the first grade teacher, SRP students do tend to do well their first year out of their extra year program giving the impression that SRP programs work well.

- the often desired and pushed for homogeneous first grade classroom environment of 'ready' on pace children may actually restrict and narrow the conception of learning and the diversity of learning styles; many first grade teachers want 'ready children' and ready means learning what is taught, how it is taught, when it is taught and in what sequence,... in their regular 'first grade' class,

- SRP programs may tend to promote old antiquated "special educational" dependency mentality among first grade teachers:

> 'you fit them and bring them back to me whole/well, so that I can then teach them

by having a 'relief valve' program such as SRP (separate from 'regular' education); SRP programs may tend to invite regular education first grade and kindergarten teachers to be regular and want 'regular' students;

"those children that aren't ready in spring of kindergarten are suppose to go to SRP", (kindergarten teacher speaking), and "if the child does not come into first grade 'ready', and hasn't gone into SRP, then he should of" (first grade teacher speaking),

- grade-level mastery 'gating assessment programs' (e.g., end of kindergarten, - you go, you don't go, you go, you don' go, etc.) tends to presume the use of proficiency testing measures with a limited dimensional assessment instruments (i.e., pencil & paper, readiness test, etc.), and thus automatically narrowing the concepts of education outcome and performance (to mastery on this, at this level, at this time, on this test) and invokes in many district, social-political pressures in the push for increased escalation of outcomes on those test scores, which do NOT have predictive validity coefficients respective of such early educational gating/tracking/grouping high stakes decision making determinations.

- measurement issues abound with the use of readiness assessment instruments plagued with psychometric flaws and very poor predictive validity; as such legal issues have been forced upon district by parent groups (and teachers and educational specialist) begging the issue of SRP program and assessment to the courts.

- in some districts as many as 60% of kindergartners are judged to be unready for first grade using

readiness tests, with minority and lower SES populations tending to share a larger proportion of this remedial eligible sample, although most SRP programs excluded minorities, which places them in beneficial (mainstreamed) settings by excluding them from SRP programs (which track/gate) students.

- in many developed European or first world counties, extra year kindergarten programs, and many cases retentions are unheard of educational practices not practiced or even considered.

- SRP studies and discussions have gone into great length to ascertain the equatedness of the SRP and non SRP samples and the discussions suggest that the two groups are equated in many studies; thus the finding of no true difference between the two in second and third grade on is generally accepted.

- studies have re-analyized data looking at immature (readiness test) or poor achievement scores (e.g., ITBS) initial equated groups and still find a no difference finding.

- SRP findings do lend themselves to a mild suggestion that SRP programs in high SES communities that have a higher percentage of SRP populations retained (> 10% of kindergarten population placed) may indicate some mild positive academic effects, but only slightly and only over two years, not three; although the present study does not suggest this with a > 20 percent enrollment ratio.